appreciate the concern of the Government for the problems of the VVIPs, VIPs and others. But the question is, the threat perception is also there so far as the corporate life, collective life, of the people of Delhi is concerned. It is on the increase. Threat perception to normal human life in Delhi is on the increase. Therefore, while considering the question of reviewing the system regarding provision of security to the VVIPs, what is the Government doing to review the protection of the common people, including the question of collusion of a large number of policemen with the criminals in Delhi?

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: All over India.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: It is a much bigger question, Madam—I can't just reply offhand to that. It is the job of the police to provide better protection to all citizens in the country, and wherever there are lapses—and there are lapses—all those are being looked into. Certainly I think that VIPs and VVIPs are, at the moment, in the name of security, in my opinion, getting many facilities and safeguards which are denied to the ordinary people. It is a fact. Ordinary people feel that there is no security for them whereas a few hundred people, who are VIPs, are being given all these things. So, that is the part of the review that we are going to carry out. I may also say—there was a question there—that we are very much tackling, at the moment—the Prime Minister spoke about it here the other day—the problem of these convoys of vehicles which belong to VIPs and VVIPs, going from somewhere to somewhere. I think Mr. Sikander Bakht had raised it that day. The whole road is closed for half an hour or 45 minutes, holding up traffic and causing a lot of trouble to the ordinary people. This is one of the things that we are certainly going to look into and try to modify and change. It doesn't happen in other countries. There is no reason why it should happen always in our country only. The British Prime Minister, when he goes from Downing Street to his office, has two guards only with him, one motor cyclist in front of his car and one at the back. And when he comes to a traffic light, the man in front goes to the back, the man in the back comes in front and then they go on again. But here we block the road for half an hour, 45 minutes, with crowds of security people all around the VIP. I think it certainly calls for a substantial change and modification.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Madam, kindly allow me.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. He has replied enough.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: I have given my name.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I know that you gave your name. But I am sorry.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: There is a question about Members living in South Avenue. ...*(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please.

SHRI R.K. KUMAR: Madam, I walk out.

(At this stage, the hon. Member left the Chamber)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I must tell the Members that we have to have a certain limit on supplementaries. If we keep on asking supplementaries on one question, we will not be able to take up other questions. Don't have 20 questions listed in the Business. Have five only. Why waste the time of the Secretariat and the Government?

*444. *[The Questioner (Shri Sushil Barongpa) was absent for answer vide column..... infra]*

Representation from the Cement Manufacturers' Association, New Delhi

*445. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:† SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

†The Question was actually asked in the House by Smt. Veena Verma.

(a) whether Government have received any representation from the Cement Manufacturers' Association, New Delhi, about the desirabili.y of enforcing the Jute Packaging Materials Act in respect of Cement, especially in view of the seepage and spoilage of cement inlcuding qualitative degradation thereof due to moisture, when packed in jute bags;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) Yes, representations are received.

(b) and (c) The Association has requested for exempting the cement from compulsory jute packaging under the provisions of the Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in packing Commodities) Act, 1987. The reasons advanced by the Association, *inter alia* are high cement seepage in jute bags, loss of strength in transit and storage, difficulty in identification, dust pollution at packaging and handling point, more expensive than plastic woven bags, consumer preference to plastic woven bags. The Association had made similar submissions before the Standing Advisory Committee which heard the representatives of various user industries on 21.6.1996. The Committee has submitted its recommendations which are under consideration of the Government.

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा: उपसभापति महोदया, जूट सीधा-सीधा गांव के किसानों से बहुत बड़े स्तर पर जुड़ा हुआ है। उनके भले के लिए 1987 में जूट पेकेजिंग मेटिरियल एक्ट पास हुआ था और यह कम्पलसरी बना दिया गया था कि सीमेंट पैक करने में जूट बैग इस्तेमाल में लाए जाएंगे। लेकिन अब मेटिरियल, रिसर्च, डेवलपमेंट, प्रोडक्शन मेटिरियल्स बहुत तरह-तरह के आ गए हैं जिससे कि सीमेंट के लिए जो जूट पैकेजिंग है वह एक तरह से थ्रेट हो गया है या वह इतना फायदेमंद नहीं रहा है। वह महंगा पड़ता है और इसमें सीमेंट का जो लॉस है, वह भी बहुत ज्यादा है। इसमें सीपेज लॉस भी बहुत ज्यादा है और यह बैग मंहगा भी पड़ता है। अब हम इसको रिवर्स भी नहीं कर सकते क्योंकि जूट ग्रोवर्स को हम लोगों को प्रोटेक्ट करना है और यह नेशनल इंटरेस्ट में है कि जो दूसरे मेटिरियल बैग्स हैं, एसटीपीई, उसको भी यूज़ किया जाए। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहती हूं कि इसमें पैकेज लॉस कितना है सीमेंट फैक्टरी का? मेरी जानकारी के अनुसार करीब 7 परसैंट लॉस है। तो एक्च्युअल लॉस सीमेंट फैक्टरी को कितना होता है जूट बैग इस्तेमाल करने में? और दूसरा यह कि सरकार....

उपसभापति: पहले पहले सवाल का जवाब तो आ जाए।

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा: इसी में है मैडम।

उपसभापति: वे पहले उसका तो जवाब दे दें।

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा: स्टेंडिंग कमेटी ने इस पर विचार किया है, बहुत सारी रिप्रजेंटेशन्स मिली हैं सीमेंट फैक्टरी से कि जूट बैग को यूज़ न किया जाए सीमेंट के लिए। इसकी रिपोर्ट आ चुकी है, स्टेंडिंग कमेटी की, और सरकार उस पर विचार कर रही है। तो मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहती हूं कि सरकार कब तक विचार पूरा कर लेगी?

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, it is true that we have received a number of representations requesting the Government to enforce the Jute Packaging Order. Fifty MPs have given a petition to enforce the Jute Packaging Order. Another 150 MPs have given another petition not to enforce it in the interest of the country. They say that the Cement Association people are telling them that there will be a loss to the extent of Rs. 800 crores. The Government has not evaluated how much it will be in the form of seepage. Yes, the High Court order is there. The Supreme Court order is also there. They have only said that the Government has got powers to enact a law. Simultaneously, they have also said that we should take the advice of the standing Advisory Committee and proceed further. We had four meetings. Recently we had a meeting on 17-12-96. The Committee headed by the Secretary (Textiles), could not come to a consensus. It has given a report. That report is under study. We have already submitted it to the CCEA.

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा: मैडम, जूट जो हेंडल करते हैं फारमर्स और जूट फैक्टरी में जब बैग बनता है तो वह हेल्थ हैज़र्ड एटमॉस्फेयर क्रिएट करता है। तो सरकार की पॉलिसी क्या है? At the risk of health hazard, it is mandatory for the cement industry to use jute bags. तो इसके बारे में पॉलिसी क्या है कि हेल्थ हैज़र्ड की शर्त पर भी हम सीमेंट फैक्टरी में जूट बैग यूज़ कर रहे हैं?

दूसरी चीज यह है कि यह पर्यावरण के लिए बहुत नुकसानदेह है। तीसरी चीज यह है कि हवा और पानी से सीमेंट की क्वालिटी खराब हो जाती है।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Because of humidity?

श्रीमती वीणा वर्मा: Yes मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि सीमेंट की पैकिंग के लिए जूट बैग्ज को यूज करने के बारे में सरकार की पालिसी क्या है?

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, this is a very ticklish issue. I did not want to decide it myself, because I did not want to touch upon the question of their earnestness. So, I thought I could shift the responsibility to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. Even the labourers, who handle the loading and unloading operations, have also represented that it is a health hazard for them. All these things will be taken care of when a final decision is taken. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Madam, the hon. Minister has said that 50 MPs have requested for the enforcement of the jute bags and another fifty are...

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Not 50. 150 are against it.

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Yes, I am telling the same thing.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: 150 are opposing this.

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: 150?

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Yes.

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Sir, part (a) of my question is: What is the conclusion of the Government? To whom are they listening? Part (b) of my question is what are the recommendations of the Committee?

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, I have already...*(Interruptions)*

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, please do not be so impatient. The Minister is answering. His name is listed on the paper. I have got the name here listed with me. Please let him answer. When you speak, his answer is not heard. *(Interruptions)* Now, let him answer, please.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: The Committee has finally recommended that 40 per cent of the cement packing should be allowed during this year and thirty per cent during the next year. Since all the four secretaries could not come to a conclusion, I thought that I should send it to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. They are going to take a decision on it. I think within one month this will be settled.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Madam, we had raised this question yesterday in a different format. The fact remains that we do not have a realistic vision of what we do in the country. The question of deciding in what material the cement has to be packed has to go to three Ministries. It looks absolutely absurd. It is not for Members of Parliament to say for or against it. It is not a number game at all. It is a matter of common sense. There is a crucial factor which I want to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister. The cement that is stored in any porous materials, it does not matter whether it is jute or *taat* or anything else..

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Jute and *taat* is the same thing.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Yes. I am saying it in a different language so that they can understand it. If the cement is stored in a porous material, it will enable the moisture to

creep in and it deteriorates the quality. It is this cement, which goes around for building bridges, roads and buildings which collapse afterwards. Then we have endless inquiries. I fail to fathom as to what argument is there beyond safety. If they keep on supporting a product, the Consumers' Cell will shoe them out of this Ministry. If they are going to support the jute industry, they will ask compulsory packing of cement in jute bags. Somewhere we have to learn to come out of this bifocal vision that we have. We resort to hypocrisy in public to get votes and then we do something else here. We have got to approach it with a common sense factor. Cement which is transported in porous material ...*(Interruptions)* I am asking the question. Please wait. You are not the only person who talks. *(Interruptions)* I am tired of this attitude. Cement which is stored in porous material is detrimental to the health of the handler. So, I want to know if they are going to come out with a clear policy very soon and not wait till 2000 A.D. or something like that. I want a time-bound programme. Don't refer it to the three Ministries. *(Interruptions)* Let him answer.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam Deputy Chairman, the hon. Member was reminding me about the common sense. Madam, because of the common sense I do not want to take a risk. I know about all the problems which she has mentioned. I am also a consumer of cement. I know that it is a complex matter. I also know that some 50 Members of Parliament are supporting on the one side and some 150 Members of Parliament are opposing it on the other side.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, a decision should have been taken in the matter. Even if 100 Members of Parliament are supporting it or 200 Members of Parliament are opposing it, it should not mar with your decision.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, I agree with you. We would take a final decision within a month.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Madam, it is good to hear about common sense. A reference was made to the memorandum from the Cement Manufacturers' Association. I do not know whether corporate sense and common sense have intermingled. According to our information about the claims that are being made about moisture content and all that, it is being blown out of proportion. Secondly, it is good that somebody has mentioned about environment. I can also talk about environment. The point is there was a reference to environment. Now, we would like to know whether synthetic bags which are being advocated by the Cement Manufacturers Association are biodegradable. A reference was made to the question of security and safety of buildings. Madam, since 200 years construction of buildings including Parliament House has been carried out. I do not know in which bag this sort of cement required for building purpose was found.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please put your question.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Madam, regarding jute bags let the Minister dispel the fear psychosis which is being generated in terms of security and safety of construction of buildings and let him state whether it is real or imaginary.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Does he understand what it means?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him put his question. It is the divergent opinions which represents the Parliament.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: I would like to know from the Minister whether synthetic bags are biodegradable or not.

श्री शिवचरण सिंह: हाफ-एन-ऑवर कर लीजिए इस पर। ...(व्यवधान) मैडम्, मेरा क्वेश्चन है। ...(व्यवधान) इस पर आधे घंटे की चर्चा करा ली जाए।

SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: Many Members have signed the memorandum because we

wanted to protect jute manufacturers and because jute industry was running in losses. That is why we have supported them. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order please.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Finally, employment opportunities in the jute sector would be affected.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Now, come to the point. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, I do not want to go into the question of degradable or biodegradable. Some people say plastic is biodegradable. Some people say jute is biodegradable. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: What does the Government say? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Madam, now we are living in a degradable atmosphere. These are small things. I do not know how much it is going to pollute the atmosphere. I do not know whether plastic bags are going to pollute the atmosphere or jute bags are going to pollute the atmosphere.

Now, this is the question. There are producers of jute. They have to be protected. That is the main important thing. In addition to that, the consumer also is to be protected here. The consumer cannot also be taxed. He says that this bag costs Rs. 4/- more; there is a seepage of three to four per cent. All these things will be taken into consideration and a final decision will be taken within a month or so. I assure this House.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As you have to protect the jute growers, there could be some other alternative use of that. *(Interruptions)*. Question Hour is over. Papers to be laid on the Table.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Funds for Pochampad Irrigation Project

*441. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been requested to release funds for early completion of Pochampad-2nd Phase Irrigation Project of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof with the reasons for delay;

(c) whether Government propose to take some action on such requests in the interest of the development of the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) In the Budget for the current year an amount of Rs. 1300 crores has been provided for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme. The assistance to projects will be provided according to guidelines laid down for the purpose.

Feasibility study of the Rohtang Tunnel

*444. SHRI SUSHIL BARONGPA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 397 given in the Rajya Sabha on 18th December, 1996 and state:

(a) whether M/s. Rites have submitted the report with regard to the second phase of the Feasibility Study on Rohtang Tunnel; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) M/s RITES have submitted the Report with regard to Second Phase of the Feasibility Study of the Tunnel. The Report is in six volumes. It indicates